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BRIAN BOLLAND
the Actress and the BISHOP
MATURE READERS

the Actress and the BISHOP™

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the Actress and the BISHOP

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BOLLAND
WHAP

the Actress and the BISHOP

"Go Boating"

with words and pictures by
Mr. Brian Bolland

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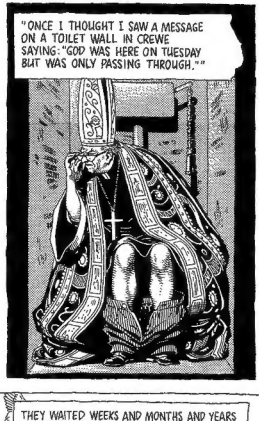
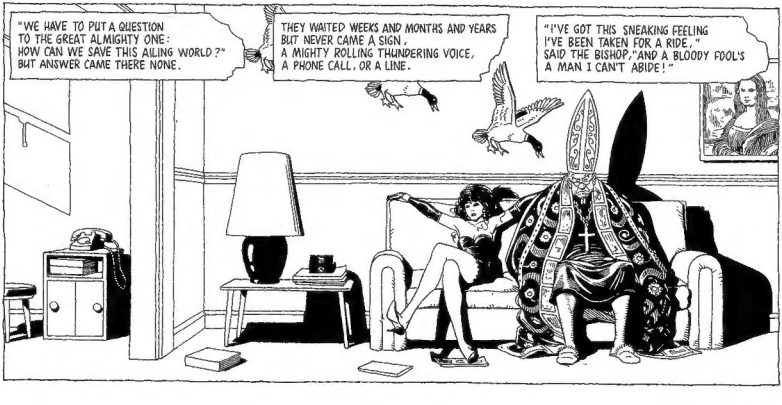
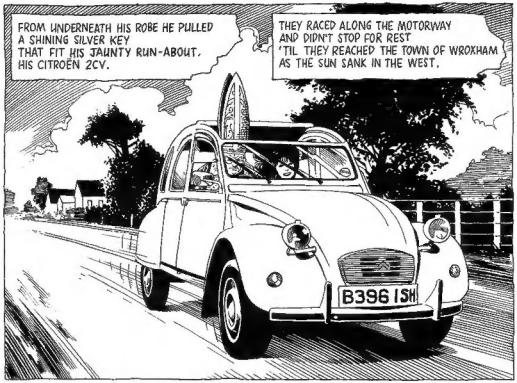


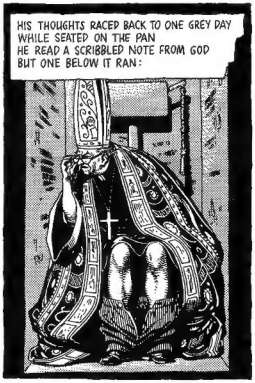


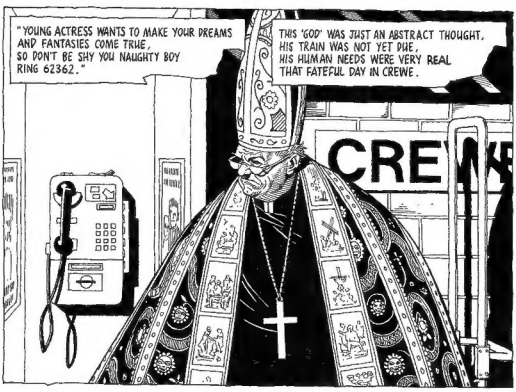
THE ACTRESS WATCHED WITH BATED BREATH
BUT NOT A WORD WAS SAID
AS HE SNATCHED A TRAVEL BROCHURE
FROM THE CUPBOARD BY HIS BED.

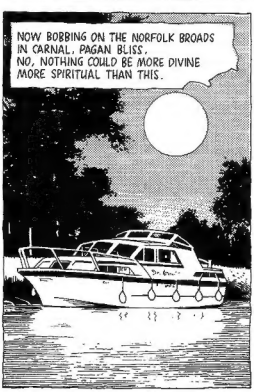

FROM UNDERNEATH HIS ROBE HE PULLED
A SHINING SILVER KEY
THAT FIT HIS JAUNTY RUN-ABOUT,
HIS CITROËN 2CV.
THEY RACED ALONG THE MOTORWAY
AND DIDN'T STOP FOR REST
'TIL THEY REACHED THE TOWN OF WROXHAM
AS THE SUN SANK IN THE WEST.
B396 ISH

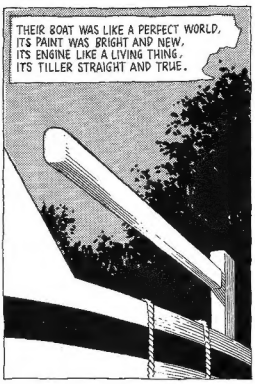
THAT NIGHT THEY DINED ON JELLIED EELS,
ON HAMSTER STEWED IN BEER,
AND CRUISED ALONG THE NORFOLK BROADS,
THE MOON WAS FULL AND CLEAR.

THEN, WHEN THE MEAL WAS OVER, AND
THE WINE AND SPIRITS DRUNK,
SHE TOOK HIM BY HIS WRINKLED HAND
AND STAGGERED TO A BUNK.

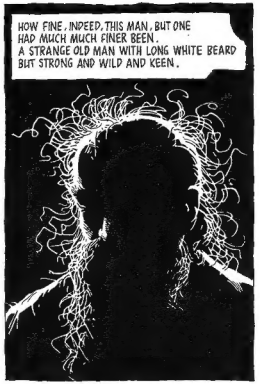

HIS THOUGHTS RACED BACK TO ONE GREY DAY
WHILE SEATED ON THE PAN
HE READ A SCRIBBLED NOTE FROM GOD
BUT ONE BELOW IT RAN:


"YOUNG ACTRESS WANTS TO MAKE YOUR DREAMS
AND FANTASIES COME TRUE,
SO DON'T BE SHY YOU NAUGHTY BOY
RING 62362."
THIS 'GOD' WAS JUST AN ABSTRACT THOUGHT,
HIS TRAIN WAS NOT YET DUE,
HIS HUMAN NEEDS WERE VERY REAL
THAT FATEFUL DAY IN CREWE.
CRE


NOW BOBBING ON THE NORFOLK BROADS
IN CARNAL, PAGAN BLISS,
NO, NOTHING COULD BE MORE DIVINE
MORE SPIRITUAL THAN THIS.

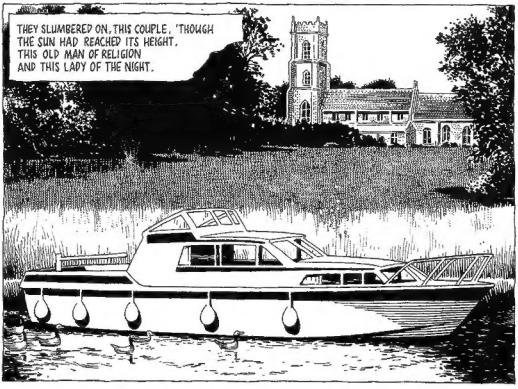

THEIR BOAT WAS LIKE A PERFECT WORLD,
ITS PAINT WAS BRIGHT AND NEW,
ITS ENGINE LIKE A LIVING THING,
ITS TILLER STRAIGHT AND TRUE.

HOW FINE, HOW YOUNG, THIS HOLY MAN
HAD BEEN, BUT AS HE SLEPT
SHE THOUGHT ABOUT ANOTHER
AND A SECRET THAT SHE KEPT.


HOW FINE, INDEED, THIS MAN, BUT ONE
HAD MUCH MUCH FINER BEEN.
A STRANGE OLD MAN WITH LONG WHITE BEARD
BUT STRONG AND WILD AND KEEN.

HE WALKED INTO HER SINGLE ROOM
AND STAYED 'TIL HALF PAST ONE,
AND TOOK ALL THAT SHE HAD TO GIVE
AND MORE, AND THEN WAS GONE.
HE CAME AND WENT AND LEFT NO CASH
BUT EVEN SO SHE KNEW
THAT NO NIGHT WOULD BE BETTER THAN
THAT TUESDAY NIGHT IN CREWE.

THE ACTRESS AND THE BISHOP SLEPT
AND DREAMT OF WHO KNOWS WHAT.
THEY THOUGHT THEY'D STAY A DAY OR TWO
IN THIS IDYLLIC SPOT.


THEY SLUMBERED ON, THIS COUPLE, 'THOUGH
THE SUN HAD REACHED ITS HEIGHT.
THIS OLD MAN OF RELIGION
AND THIS LADY OF THE NIGHT.

A TELEPHONE WAS RINGING IN
THEIR FLAT IN RAYNERS LANE
THE CALLER RANG FOR HALF AN HOUR
BUT NEVER RANG AGAIN.
01K LONDON AREA
01N LONDON AREA

the Actress and the BISHOP

"Throw a Party"

with words and pictures by
Mr. Brian Bolland

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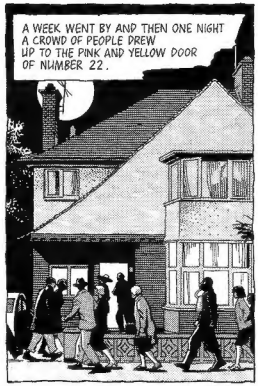


"IT'S ETHEL WHITE!" HE NEARLY CHOKED.
"MY GOD, IT'S REALLY YOU!
YOU LEFT ME BROKEN-HEARTED
BACK IN 1942."

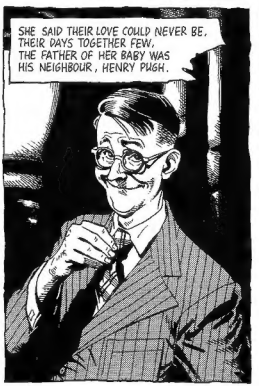
THE YEARS ROLLED BACK AND ONCE AGAIN
HIS TOES WERE NUMB WITH COLD.
A LAD OF BARELY 17
HIS COAT THREADBARE AND OLD.
A PRETTY BRADFORD LASS WALKED BY
AND STAMPED HARD ON HIS FOOT.
HE YELLED A REALLY VULGAR WORD
AND SAID HE'D GET HER, BUT...

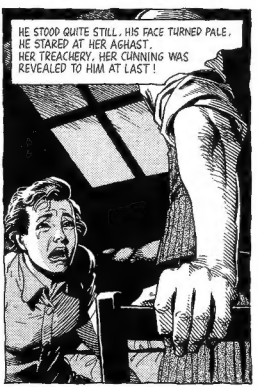
SHE TOOK HIS GRIMY HAND IN HERS
AND BY THE GASWORKS DOOR
SHE SHOWED HIM SOMETHING SPECIAL THAT
HE'D NEVER SEEN BEFORE.

THEY SAID THEY'D LOVE FOREVER
AND THAT LOVE LIKE THEIRS WAS RARE.
HIS DEAREST, DARLING ETHEL
WAS A PRIZE BEYOND COMPARE.

NOW 21, AT LAST A MAN
AND ETHEL STILL 19.
HE THOUGHT THEIRS WAS THE GREATEST LOVE
THE WORLD HAD EVER SEEN.

ONE FRIDAY IN HIS UPSTAIRS ROOM,
HIS DAD WAS UP THE PUB,
SHE TOLD HIM THROUGH HER BITTER TEARS
THAT SHE WAS IN THE CLUB.


SHE SAID THEIR LOVE COULD NEVER BE,
THEIR DAYS TOGETHER FEW.
THE FATHER OF HER BABY WAS
HIS NEIGHBOUR, HENRY PUGH.


HE STOOD QUITE STILL, HIS FACE TURNED PALE,
HE STARED AT HER AGHAST.
HER TREACHERY, HER CUNNING WAS
REVEALED TO HIM AT LAST!

HIS ANGER KNEW NO LIMIT AS HE SEIZED A WOODEN CHAIR. IT HURTLED THROUGH A WINDOW AND IT LANDED WHO KNOWS WHERE.
THE CHAIR WAS MEANT FOR ETHEL WHITE BUT JUST IN TIME SHE'D FLED, FOR ALL HE KNEW TO HENRY PUGH, AND NOTHING MORE WAS SAID.

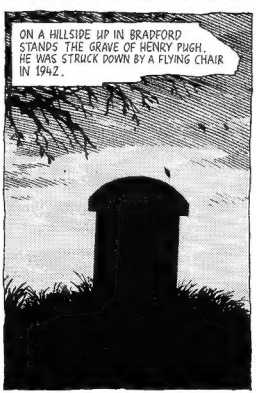
NOW HERE SHE WAS IN RAYNER'S LANE (THE YEARS HAD NOT BEEN KIND) REMINDING HIM OF BRADFORD AND THE LIFE HE'D LEFT BEHIND.

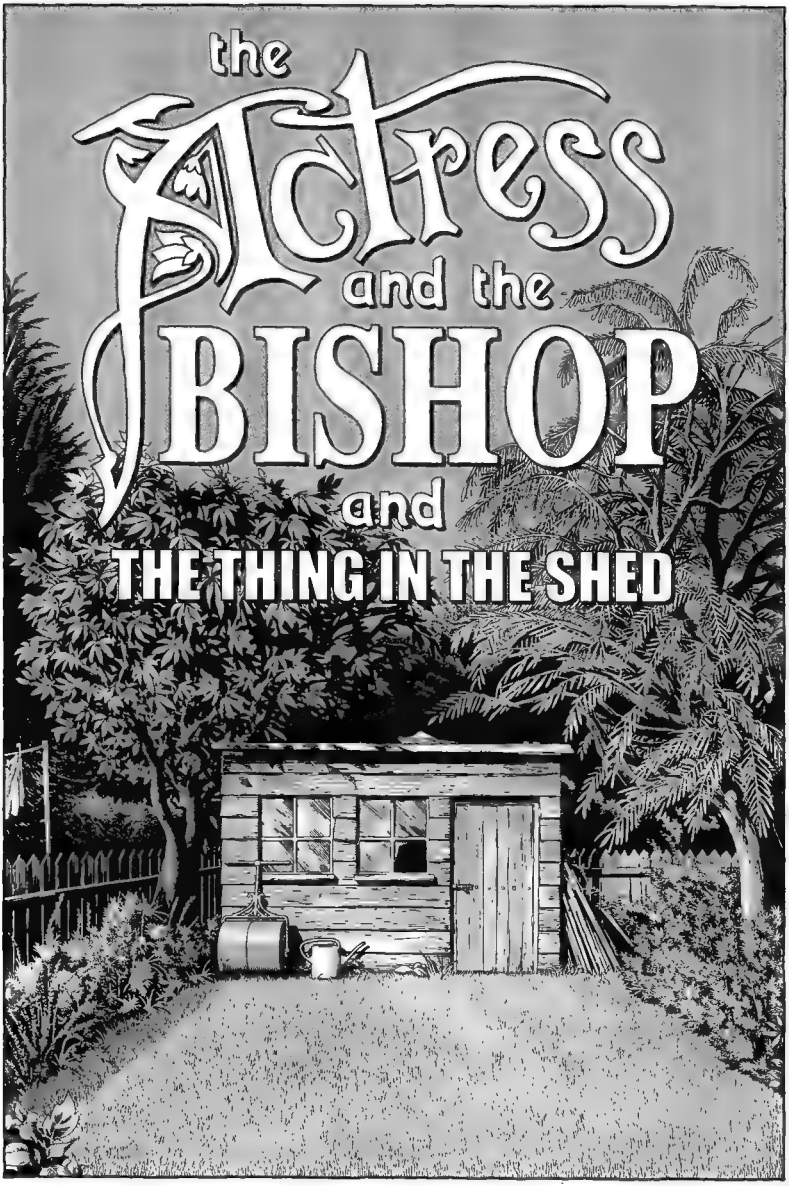
"I NEVER MARRIED HENRY PUGH, I MARRIED CYRIL SLY." SHE SAID JUST AS THEY PARTED. BUT SHE DIDN'T MENTION WHY.

OUT ON THE LAWN TWO SHADOWS MERGED AND VOICES MURMURED LOW. OF WHAT THEY SPOKE AND WHO THEY WERE NO ONE COULD REALLY KNOW.
ONE VOICE WAS MALE. IT'S TONE WAS LOW AND TINGED WITH FAINT DESPAIR. "I TRIED TO CALL YOU ON THE PHONE, BUT YOU WERE NEVER THERE."

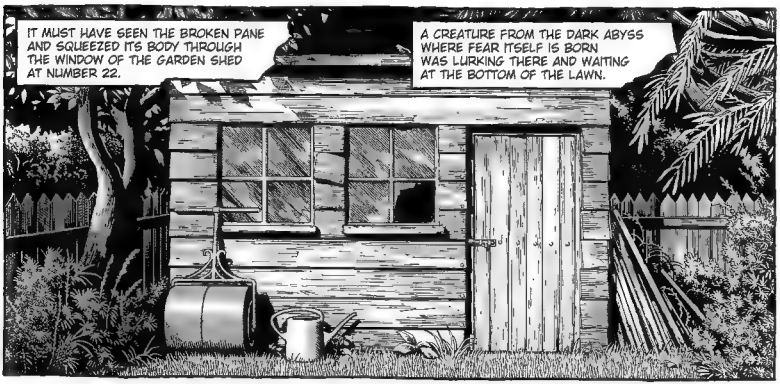
"I'VE BEEN AND DONE SO MANY THINGS. SUCCESSES HAVE BEEN FEW. THE GREATEST TRIUMPH OF THEM ALL, THAT TUESDAY NIGHT IN CREWE!"

THE ACTRESS AND THE BISHOP THOUGHT THE PARTY HAD GONE WELL. AND ALL THE GUESTS WERE SATISFIED AS FAR AS THEY COULD TELL.

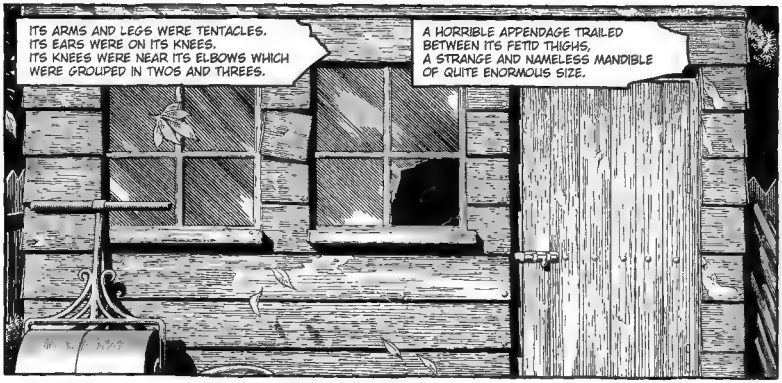

ON A HILLSIDE UP IN BRADFORD STANDS THE GRAVE OF HENRY PUGH. HE WAS STRUCK DOWN BY A FLYING CHAIR IN 1942.


the
Actress
and the
BISHOP
and
THE THING IN THE SHED

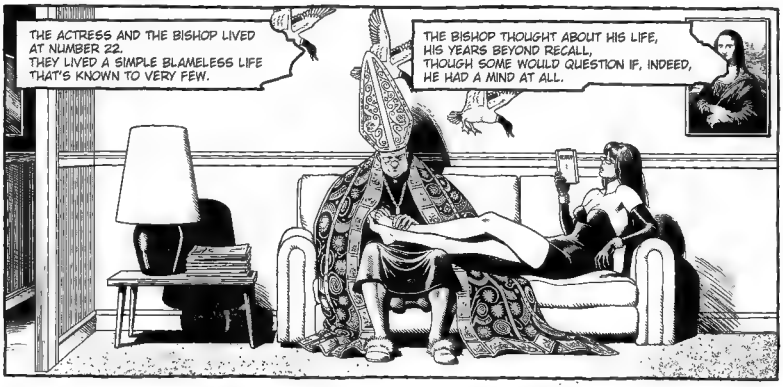
SOMETHING INDESCRIBABLE
WAS SQUATTING IN THE SHED,
A SQUAMOUS THING, A LOATHSOME GREEN,
OR MAYBE IT WAS RED.
ONE WINTER'S NIGHT, A FILTHY NIGHT,
IT SHELTERED FROM THE RAIN
AND GIBBERED BY A GARDEN FENCE
IN LEAFY RAYNERS LANE.


IT MUST HAVE SEEN THE BROKEN PANE
AND SQUEEZED ITS BODY THROUGH
THE WINDOW OF THE GARDEN SHED
AT NUMBER 22.
A CREATURE FROM THE DARK ABYSS
WHERE FEAR ITSELF IS BORN
WAS LURKING THERE AND WAITING
AT THE BOTTOM OF THE LAWN.

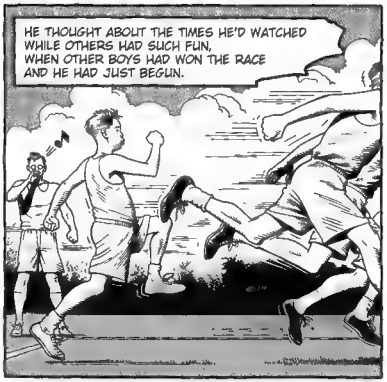
ITS LOOKS WERE QUITE REVOLTING,
TRUELY HIDEOUS TO SEE.
IN ALL THE WORLD A FOULER THING
THAN THIS COULD NEVER BE.
ITS FACE WAS SIMPLY FRIGHTFUL
IF, INDEED, IT WAS A FACE.
ITS AWFUL HEAD RESIDED IN
A MOST SURPRISING PLACE.


ITS ARMS AND LEGS WERE TENTACLES.
ITS EARS WERE ON ITS KNEES.
ITS KNEES WERE NEAR ITS ELBOWS WHICH WERE GROUPED IN TWOS AND THREES.
A HORRIBLE APPENDAGE TRAILED BETWEEN ITS FETID THIGHS,
A STRANGE AND NAMELESS MANDIBLE OF QUITE ENORMOUS SIZE.

A CROSS BETWEEN A JELLY FISH,
A MONKEY AND A FLEA,
IT HAD A SINGLE STARING EYE,
OR MAYBE TWO OR THREE.
AND AS THE SEASONS CAME AND WENT
IT WAITED IN THE THE GLOOM,
A CREATURE BORN OF HELL ITSELF,
A HARBINGER OF DOOM.

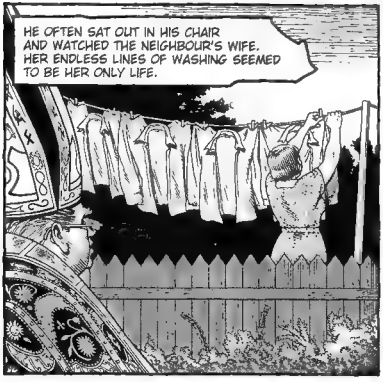

THE ACTRESS AND THE BISHOP LIVED AT NUMBER 22.
THEY LIVED A SIMPLE BLAMELESS LIFE THAT'S KNOWN TO VERY FEW.
THE BISHOP THOUGHT ABOUT HIS LIFE,
HIS YEARS BEYOND RECALL,
THOUGH SOME WOULD QUESTION IF, INDEED,
HE HAD A MIND AT ALL.

HE THOUGHT ABOUT THE THINGS HE'D DONE
BACK IN HIS YOUNGER DAYS,
THE TIMES HE'D NEITHER LOVED NOR LOST,
THE ERROR OF HIS WAYS.


HE THOUGHT ABOUT THE TIMES HE'D WATCHED
WHILE OTHERS HAD SUCH FUN,
WHEN OTHER BOYS HAD WON THE RACE
AND HE HAD JUST BEGUN.

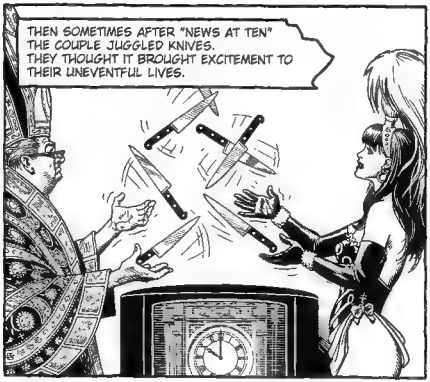
HE'D SOMEHOW LOST THE HUMAN RACE
AND NOW THOSE DAYS WERE GONE
HE THOUGHT ABOUT THE LESSONS LEARNED
BUT COULDN'T THINK OF ONE.

SO HERE ENSCONCED IN RAYNERS LANE
HE WATCHED THE YEARS FLY BY.
HE WATCHED THE SPIDERS SPIN THEIR WEBS
AND WATCHED THEIR VICTIMS DIE.


HE OFTEN SAT OUT IN HIS CHAIR
AND WATCHED THE NEIGHBOUR'S WIFE.
HER ENDLESS LINES OF WASHING SEEMED
TO BE HER ONLY LIFE.

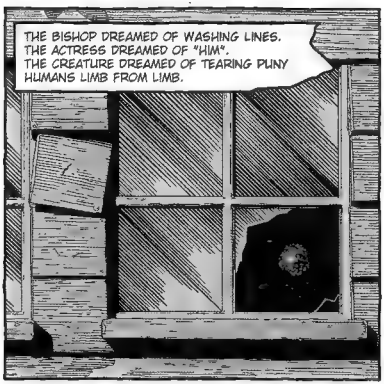
THE ACTRESS COOKED AND DARNED HIS SOCKS
AND STUDIED ANCIENT GREEK.
SHE'D VERY NEARLY MASTERED IT
IN ONLY JUST A WEEK.

SHE DID THE WASHING UP AND SCRUBBED
THE LINO ON HER KNEES,
RECITING ACTS FROM SHAKESPEARE WHICH
SHE'D LEARNED IN PORTUGUESE.
Ser ou não ser
isto é a pergunta..


THEN SOMETIMES AFTER "NEWS AT TEN"
THE COUPLE JUGGLED KNIVES.
THEY THOUGHT IT BROUGHT EXCITEMENT TO
THEIR UNEVENTFUL LIVES.

AND WHEN THE DAY WAS OVER THEY'D
RETIRE TO THEIR ROOM
NOT KNOWING THAT A FEARFUL FIEND
WAS WAITING IN THE GLOOM.

THE BISHOP SLUMBERED LIKE A LAMB.
THE ACTRESS DID AS WELL.
WHILE OUT THERE IN THE DARKNESS LURKED
THE DEMON-SPAWN FROM HELL.


THE BISHOP DREAMED OF WASHING LINES.
THE ACTRESS DREAMED OF "HIM".
THE CREATURE DREAMED OF TEARING PUNY
HUMANS LIMB FROM LIMB.

AND IN ITS MIND IT SAW HER THERE
BEFORE THE BREAK OF DAWN,
THE FIGURE OF THE ACTRESS WALKING
NAKED ON THE LAWN.

HER SKIN WAS WHITE AS PORCELAIN.
HER HAIR WAS BLACK AS JET.
HER BREASTS WERE FULL AND RIPE AS FRUIT,
HER TEETH A PERFECT SET.

THE DEWY GRASS CARESSED HER FEET,
(THE LAWN HAD NOT BEEN CUT),
AS STEP BY STEP SHE MOVED TOWARD
THE CREATURE IN THE HUT.

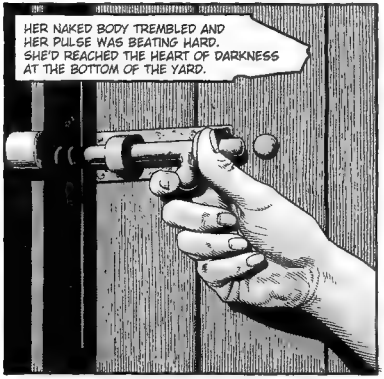
IT WATCHED HER THROUGH THE WINDOW WHERE
THE BROKEN PANE HAD BEEN,
THE MOST ENTICING MORSEL THAT
THE THING HAD EVER SEEN.

THE ACTRESS TOO WAS DREAMING
AS SHE SLUMBERED IN HER BED
THAT SOMETHING STRANGE WAS DRAWING HER
TOWARDS THE GARDEN SHED.

SHE FERVENTLY BELIEVED THE THING
THAT SHE WAS SEARCHING FOR
WAS OUT THERE IN THE DARK OLD SHED
BEHIND ITS WOODEN DOOR.

AN EVIL EYE WAS GLINTING
AS SHE MOVED ON THROUGH THE GRASS
FROM THERE WITHIN THAT DREAD DARK PLACE
OR WAS IT BROKEN GLASS.

A HORRID STENCH LIKE OPEN GRAVES AND ALL THAT THEY CONTAIN WAS WAFTING UP HER NOSE, BUT IT WAS PROBABLY THE DRAIN.
THE SOUND OF HEAVY BREATHING, LIKE SHE'D ONCE HEARD ON THE PHONE, WAS GROWING EVER LOUDER, BUT IT COULD HAVE BEEN HER OWN.

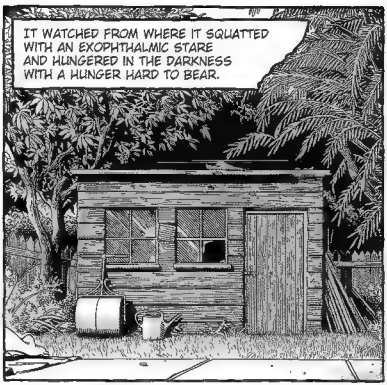

HER NAKED BODY TREMBLED AND HER PULSE WAS BEATING HARD. SHE'D REACHED THE HEART OF DARKNESS AT THE BOTTOM OF THE YARD.

THEN SUDDENLY IT GRABBED HER ARM! AT LAST IT HAD ITS PRIZE! IT REARED UP HUGE BEFORE HER AND SHE OPENED UP HER EYES.

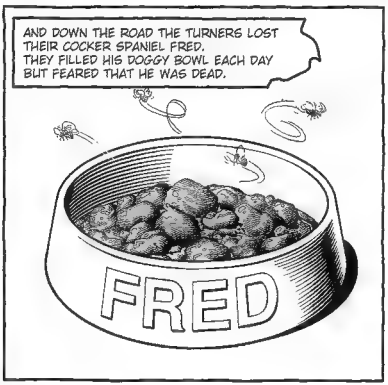
A BULKY SHAPE BORE OVER HER AND SHE COULD PLAINLY SEE THE FIGURE OF THE BISHOP WITH HER MORNING CUP OF TEA.

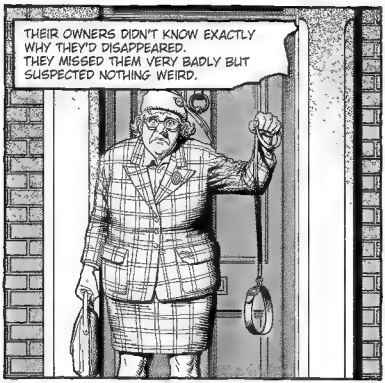
YES, TEA IN BED, THE PERFECT WAY TO START A BRAND NEW DAY, THE LURKING FEARS OF NIGHT-TIME NOW A MILLION MILES AWAY.

SO LIFE WENT ON IN RAYNERS LANE.
THE WEEKS THEY SIMPLY FLEW.
THE THING STILL LAY THERE WAITING
AND ITS FURY GREW AND GREW.

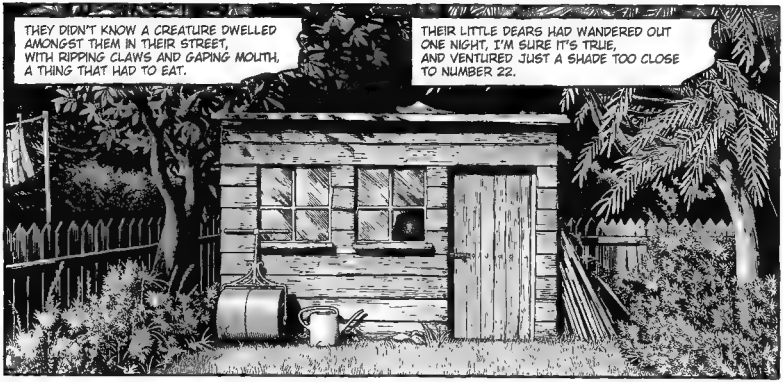

IT WATCHED FROM WHERE IT SQUATTED
WITH AN EXOPHTHALMIC STARE
AND HUNGERED IN THE DARKNESS
WITH A HUNGER HARD TO BEAR.

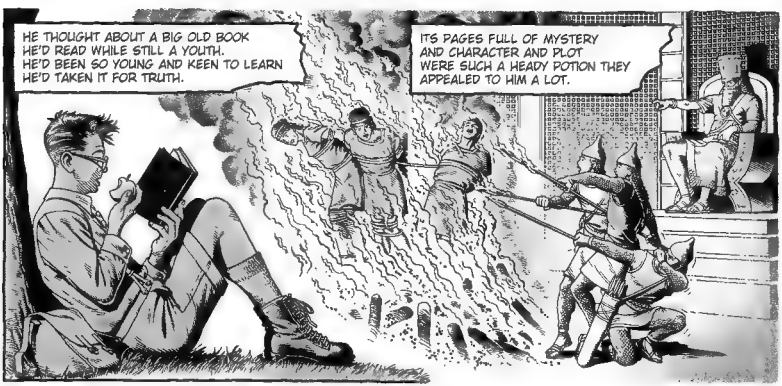
THEN SURE ENOUGH A BURMESE CAT
FROM NUMBER 48
WENT MISSING ON A MONDAY NIGHT
AND NO ONE KNEW HER FATE.


AND DOWN THE ROAD THE TURNERS LOST
THEIR COCKER SPANIEL FRED.
THEY FILLED HIS DOGGY BOWL EACH DAY
BUT FEARED THAT HE WAS DEAD.
FRED


THEIR OWNERS DIDN'T KNOW EXACTLY
WHY THEY'D DISAPPEARED.
THEY MISSED THEM VERY BADLY BUT
SUSPECTED NOTHING WEIRD.

THEIR OLD AND TRUSTING FRIENDS WERE GONE
BUT NO ONE MADE A FUSS.
PERHAPS THEY'D GONE A-COURTING OR
BEEN RUN DOWN BY A BUS.





THEY DIDN'T KNOW A CREATURE DWELLED AMONGST THEM IN THEIR STREET, WITH RIPPING CLAWS AND GAPING MOUTH, A THING THAT HAD TO EAT.

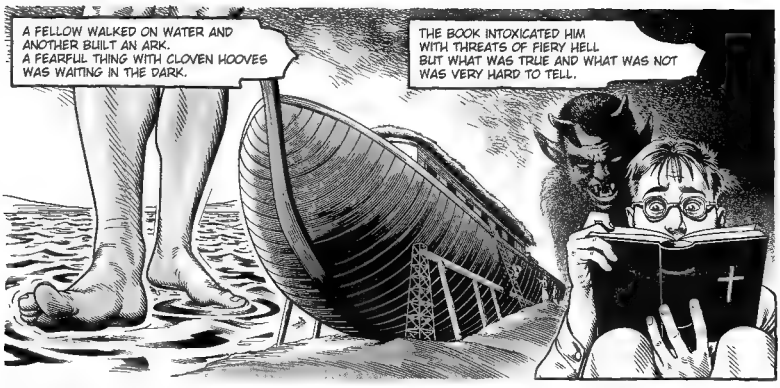
THEIR LITTLE DEARS HAD WANDERED OUT ONE NIGHT, I'M SURE IT'S TRUE, AND VENTURED JUST A SHADE TOO CLOSE TO NUMBER 22.

THE BISHOP, AFTER DINNER, THOUGHT HE'D SIT AND HAVE A THINK. THE ACTRESS GAZED WITH HORROR AT THE DISHES IN THE SINK.

THE BISHOP OFTEN SAT AROUND AND WONDERED WHAT WAS TRUE. A THING WE ALL DESERVED TO KNOW BUT NO ONE REALLY KNEW.

HE THOUGHT ABOUT A BIG OLD BOOK HE'D READ WHILE STILL A YOUTH. HE'D BEEN SO YOUNG AND KEEN TO LEARN HE'D TAKEN IT FOR TRUTH.

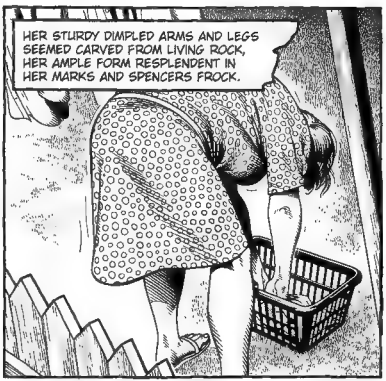
ITS PAGES FULL OF MYSTERY AND CHARACTER AND PLOT WERE SUCH A HEADY POTION THEY APPEALED TO HIM A LOT.


A FELLOW WALKED ON WATER AND
ANOTHER BUILT AN ARK.
A FEARFUL THING WITH CLOVEN HOOVES
WAS WAITING IN THE DARK.
THE BOOK INTOXICATED HIM
WITH THREATS OF FIERY HELL
BUT WHAT WAS TRUE AND WHAT WAS NOT
WAS VERY HARD TO TELL.

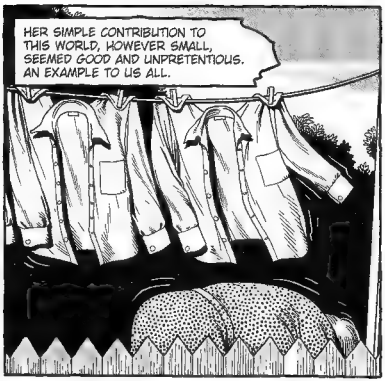
HE THOUGHT ABOUT THOSE STRANGE OLD TALES
AND CHUCKLED TO HIMSELF.
HE THOUGHT HE'D READ THE BOOK AGAIN
BUT LEFT IT ON THE SHELF.

AND NOW IN HIS ADVANCING YEARS,
THE TWILIGHT OF HIS LIFE,
HE SOMEHOW SAW A GREATER TRUTH
IN NEXTDOOR NEIGHBOUR'S WIFE

SHE HUNG HER WASHING UP WHEN WET
AND TOOK IT DOWN WHEN DRY
WITH DAILY REGULARITY
AND NEVER QUESTIONED WHY.

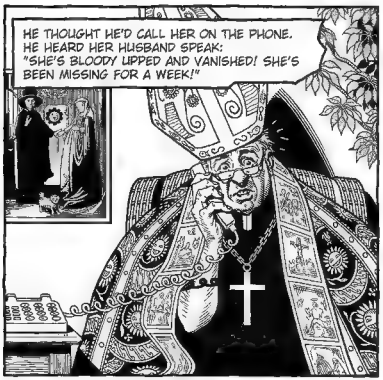

HER STURDY DIMPLED ARMS AND LEGS
SEEMED CARVED FROM LIVING ROCK,
HER AMPLE FORM RESPLENDENT IN
HER MARKS AND SPENCERS FROCK.

SHE WENT ABOUT HER MUNDANE WORK WITH HANDS ROUGH-HEWN AND LARGE AS PERSPIRATION TRICKLED DOWN HER BOLD DÉCOLLETAGE.


HER SIMPLE CONTRIBUTION TO THIS WORLD, HOWEVER SMALL, SEEMED GOOD AND UNPRETENTIOUS. AN EXAMPLE TO US ALL.

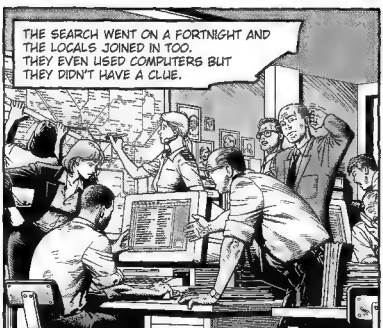
HE SAW HER AS THE PILLAR THAT THE WORLD WAS STANDING ON AND FELT SHE'D STILL BE STANDING THERE WHEN ALL WAS DONE AND GONE.

HE THOUGHT ABOUT HER PINNING UP THE WASHING WITH A SMILE AND WONDERED WHY, IN FACT, HE HADN'T SEEN HER FOR A WHILE.
...?

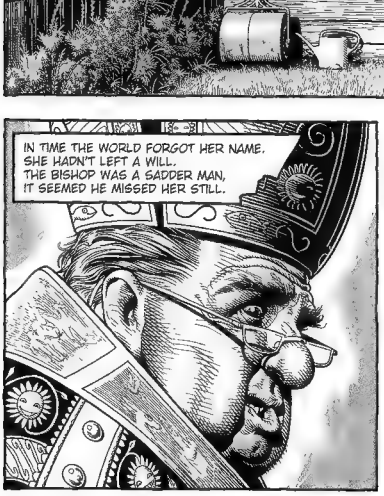

HE THOUGHT HE'D CALL HER ON THE PHONE. HE HEARD HER HUSBAND SPEAK: "SHE'S BLOODY UPPED AND VANISHED! SHE'S BEEN MISSING FOR A WEEK!"

"THE MONDAY WASH WAS NEARLY DONE. SHE'D GIVEN IT A SPIN. SHE'D GONE TO BLOODY HANG IT UP AND NEVER CAME BACK IN!"

THE MET POLICE TOOK ON THE CASE.
A SEARCH GOT UNDER WAY.
THEY SEARCHED FOR HER BOTH FAR AND WIDE,
THEY SEARCHED BOTH NIGHT AND DAY.


THE SEARCH WENT ON A FORTNIGHT AND
THE LOCALS JOINED IN TOO.
THEY EVEN USED COMPUTERS BUT
THEY DIDN'T HAVE A CLUE.

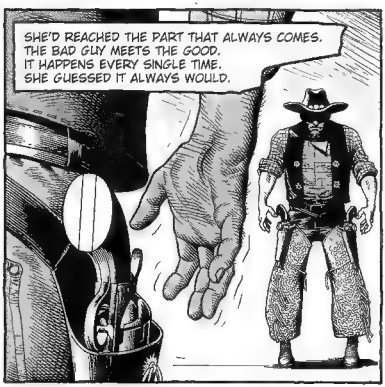
THE SEARCH WAS SOON ABANDONED. THE
POLICE PRONOUNCED HER DEAD,
BUT NO ONE THOUGHT TO TAKE A LOOK
INSIDE THE GARDEN SHED.
FOR IF THEY HAD THEY MIGHT HAVE HEARD
THE WOMAN'S DYING MOANS,
OR SEEN A FRIGHTFUL APPARITION
SNORING ON HER BONES.

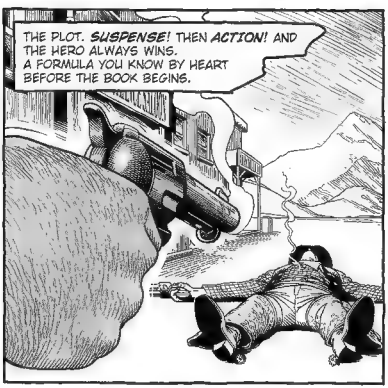

IN TIME THE WORLD FORGOT HER NAME.
SHE HADN'T LEFT A WILL.
THE BISHOP WAS A SADDER MAN,
IT SEEMED HE MISSED HER STILL.

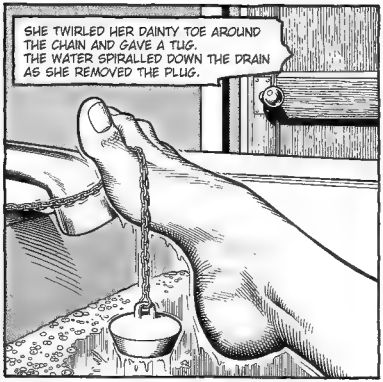
THE ACTRESS ASKED HIM HOW HE WAS.
HE TOLD HER HE WAS FINE –
BUT SPENT HIS DAYS JUST GAZING AT
THAT EMPTY WASHING LINE.

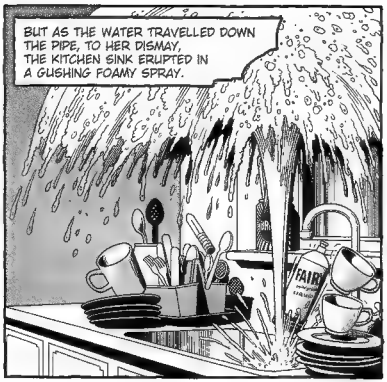
ONE EVENING AFTER DINING LATE
(THEY'D HAD A BIT TO DRINK)
THE ACTRESS ONCE MORE WENT TO FACE
THE DISHES IN THE SINK.
SHE DID THE JOB IN DOUBLE TIME.
THE PLATES WERE STACKED AND DRAINED.
THE PLUMBING WHICH WAS OLD AND LAME
HAD NEVER ONCE COMPLAINED.
BRASSO
FAIRY

SHE THOUGHT HER CHORES WERE OVER FOR
THE NIGHT, WITH ANY LUCK.
SHE SETTLED IN A FOAMY BATH
AND OPENED UP HER BOOK.
A NOVEL FROM A MARKET STALL
CALLED "GUNFIGHT ON THE RANGE".
A LITTLE THUMBED AND BROWN WITH AGE
IT MADE A PLEASANT CHANGE.


SHE'D REACHED THE PART THAT ALWAYS COMES.
THE BAD GUY MEETS THE GOOD.
IT HAPPENS EVERY SINGLE TIME.
SHE GUESSED IT ALWAYS WOULD.


THE PLOT. SUSPENSE! THEN ACTION! AND
THE HERO ALWAYS WINS.
A FORMULA YOU KNOW BY HEART
BEFORE THE BOOK BEGINS.

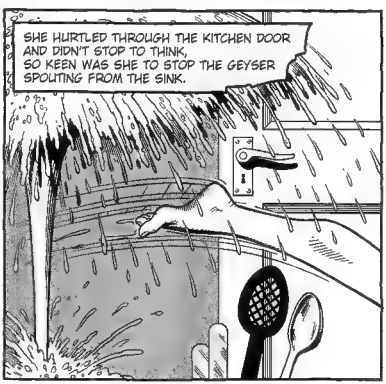

SHE TWIRLED HER DAINTY TOE AROUND THE CHAIN AND GAVE A TUG.
THE WATER SPIRALLED DOWN THE DRAIN AS SHE REMOVED THE PLUG.


BUT AS THE WATER TRAVELLED DOWN THE PIPE, TO HER DISMAY,
THE KITCHEN SINK ERUPTED IN A GUSHING FOAMY SPRAY.

SHE SKIDDED TO A HALT ALONG THE SOAPY KITCHEN FLOOR AND SEARCHED AROUND FOR SOMETHING THAT HAD WORKED FOR HER BEFORE.

SHE HAD TO FIND THE PLUNGER FAST, THE GOOD OLD PLUMBER'S FRIEND, AND STICK IT IN THE WATER AND UNBLOCK THAT DARNED U-BEND!

SHE ASKED THE BISHOP WHERE IT WAS AND THIS IS WHAT HE SAID:
I THINK, WHEN LAST I SAW IT, IT WAS IN THE GARDEN SHED.


SHE HURTLED THROUGH THE KITCHEN DOOR AND DIDN'T STOP TO THINK, SO KEEN WAS SHE TO STOP THE GEYSER SPOUTING FROM THE SINK.

AN OWL SOMEWHERE WAS HOOTING
FROM A BRANCH OUT IN THE NIGHT,
BUT OTHER THINGS WERE STIRRING IN
THE DARKNESS OUT OF SIGHT.

SO THERE SHE WAS, AS IN HER DREAM,
BEFORE THE BREAK OF DAWN,
THE ACTRESS, SURE ENOUGH, WAS WALKING
NAKED ON THE LAWN.

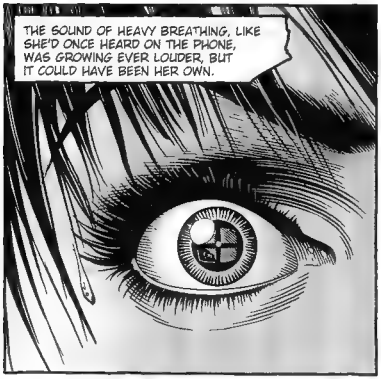
THE DEWY GRASS CARESSED HER FEET,
(THE LAWN WAS STILL NOT CUT,)
AS STEP BY STEP SHE MOVED TOWARDS
THAT GLOOMY WOODEN HUT.

A GIBBOUS MOON WAS SHINING LIKE
A CHEESECAKE IN THE SKY.
THE CREATURE WATCHED HER COMING AND
COULD NOT BELIEVE ITS EYE.

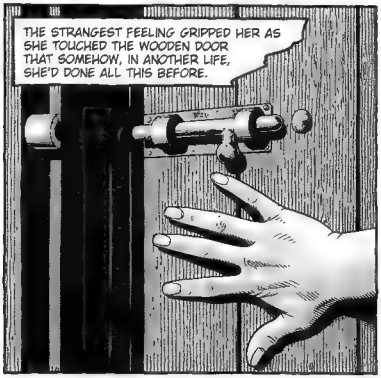
THE NEIGHBOUR'S WIFE HAD BEEN A TASTY
MORSEL TO BE SURE,
BUT NOW IT WOULD DEVOUR THE ONE
IT REALLY HUNGERED FOR.

SHE SENSED THAT SOMETHING WAITED IN
THE DARKNESS UP AHEAD
AS ONWARDS SHE PROCEEDED WITH
A SLOW AND MEASURED TREAD.

AN EVIL EYE WAS GLINTING,
AS SHE MOVED ON THROUGH THE GRASS,
FROM THERE BEHIND THE WINDOW FRAME,
OR WAS IT BROKEN GLASS.
A HORRID STENCH LIKE OPEN GRAVES
AND ALL THAT THEY CONTAIN
WAS WAFTING UP HER NOSE, BUT
IT WAS PROBABLY THE DRAIN.


THE SOUND OF HEAVY BREATHING, LIKE
SHE'D ONCE HEARD ON THE PHONE,
WAS GROWING EVER LOUDER, BUT
IT COULD HAVE BEEN HER OWN.

HER NAKED BODY TREMBLED AND
HER PULSE WAS BEATING HARD.
SHE'D REACHED THE HEART OF DARKNESS
AT THE BOTTOM OF THE YARD.


THE STRANGEST FEELING GRIPPED HER AS
SHE TOUCHED THE WOODEN DOOR
THAT SOMEHOW, IN ANOTHER LIFE,
SHE'D DONE ALL THIS BEFORE.

WHEN SUDDENLY SHE HEARD A CRY!
ALARMED, SHE SPUN AROUND,
THEN HEADED WITH GREAT SPEED IN THE
DIRECTION OF THE SOUND.

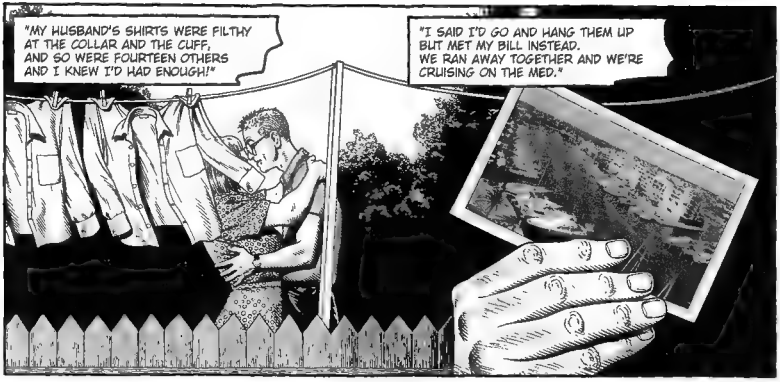
THE BISHOP SAT THERE IN THE HALL,
HIS LEGS TOO WEAK TO STAND,
HE SAT THERE BY THE FRONT DOOR MAT,
A POSTCARD IN HIS HAND
HE'D SEEN THE FLOOD ADVANCE ALONG
THE HALL BENEATH THE STAIR.
HE'D LIFTED UP THE SODDEN MAT
AND SAW IT LYING THERE.

THE ACTRESS WONDERED WHY THE FUSS
AND WENT TO TURN AWAY.
THE BISHOP THOUGHT SHE OUGHT TO HEAR
JUST WHAT IT HAD TO SAY.

"DEAR SIR" IT READ "YOU DON'T KNOW ME
AND, THOUGH I DON'T KNOW YOU,
I'VE SEEN YOU IN YOUR MITRE AND
YOUR GOWN A TIME OR TWO."

"ONE DAY WHILE BUYING WASHING POWDER
DOWN THE SUPERSTORE
A YOUNG MAN, KIND OF, CAUGHT MY EYE.
HE'S ONLY 24."
Going Places

"EACH TIME I WENT TO BUY MORE SOAP
HE SAT THERE AT THE TILL.
OUR HANDS TOUCHED AS HE GAVE ME CHANGE.
HE SAID HIS NAME WAS BILL."


"MY HUSBAND'S SHIRTS WERE FILTHY AT THE COLLAR AND THE CUFF, AND SO WERE FOURTEEN OTHERS AND I KNEW I'D HAD ENOUGH!"
"I SAID I'D GO AND HANG THEM UP BUT MET MY BILL INSTEAD. WE RAN AWAY TOGETHER AND WE'RE CRUISING ON THE MED."

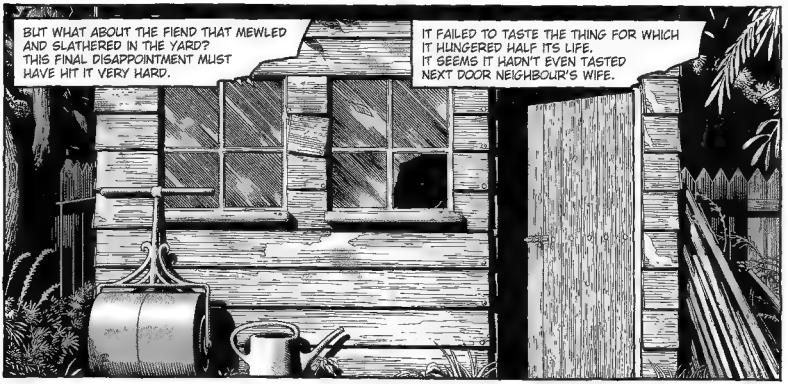
"SO PLEASE INFORM MY BERT FROM ME THAT HE'S STILL IN HIS PRIME. THOUGH WHAT I'VE DONE MIGHT BREAK HIS HEART HIS GRIEF WILL EASE IN TIME."
HE'LL MISS ME VERY MUCH, I KNOW, AND LOSING SOMEONE HURTS, BUT NOW THE LAZY SOD'LL HAVE TO LEARN TO WASH HIS OWN DAMN SHIRTS!"

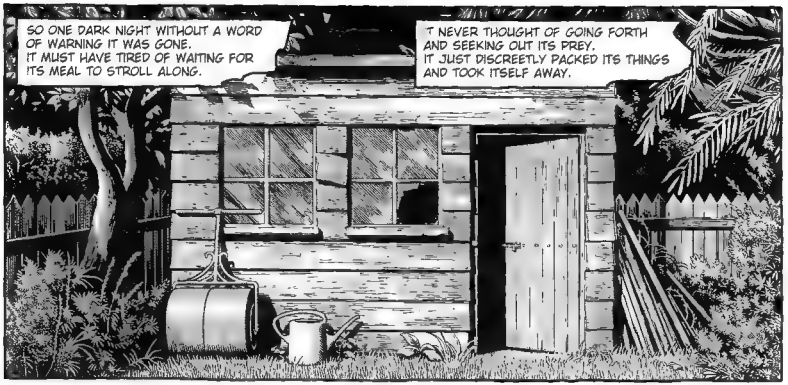
"GOODBYE FOR GOOD TO RAYNERS LANE. I'VE FOUND A BETTER LIFE." SIGNED (SOMETHING INDECIPHERABLE). YOUR NEXT DOOR NEIGHBOUR'S WIFE."
THE BISHOP SAT THERE LOOKING STUNNED. A TEAR WAS IN HIS EYE. NOW EVERYTHING THAT HE'D BELIEVED HAD PROVED TO BE A LIE.

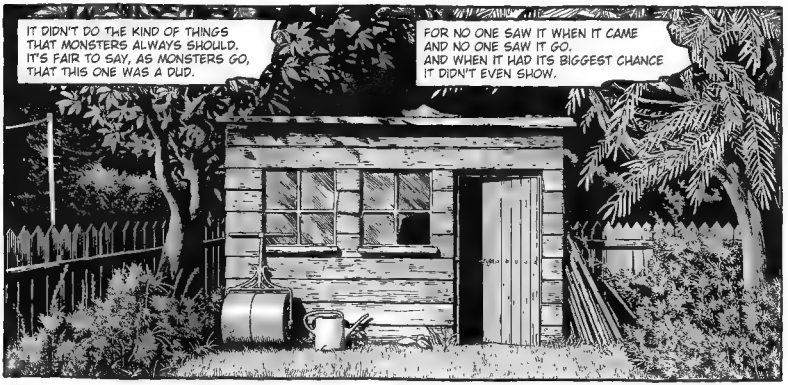
THE ACTRESS HAD A SUDDEN THOUGHT.
IT WASN'T IN THE SHED.
SHE'D LEFT THE MISSING PLUNGER
IN THE DRAWER BESIDE HER BED.

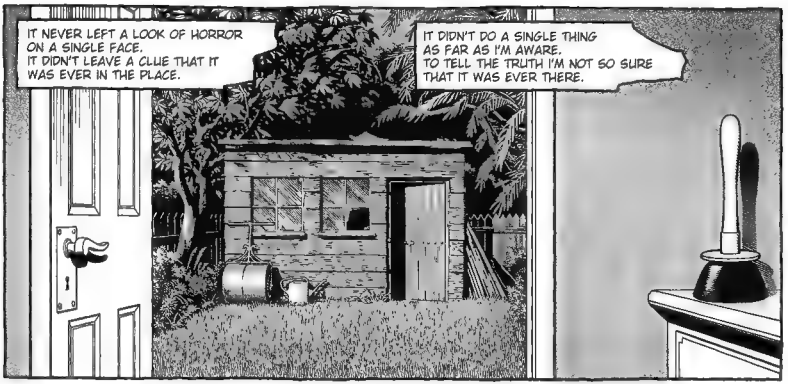
SHE FOUND THE THING AND FIXED THE STUPID
SINK WITHOUT DELAY.
IT STILL REMAINS IN PERFECT WORKING
ORDER TO THIS DAY.

SO THINGS RETURNED TO NORMAL IN
SUBURBAN RAYNERS LANE,
AND NOTHING VERY INTERESTING
HAPPENED THERE AGAIN.
THE ACTRESS AND THE BISHOP LIVED
THEIR LIVES FROM DAY TO DAY
AND NOTHING EVER BOTHERED THEM
AGAIN IN ANY WAY.


BUT WHAT ABOUT THE FIEND THAT MEWLED
AND SLATHERED IN THE YARD?
THIS FINAL DISAPPOINTMENT MUST
HAVE HIT IT VERY HARD.
IT FAILED TO TASTE THE THING FOR WHICH
IT HUNGERED HALF ITS LIFE.
IT SEEMS IT HADN'T EVEN TASTED
NEXT DOOR NEIGHBOUR'S WIFE.


SO ONE DARK NIGHT WITHOUT A WORD OF WARNING IT WAS GONE.
IT MUST HAVE TIRED OF WAITING FOR ITS MEAL TO STROLL ALONG.
I NEVER THOUGHT OF GOING FORTH AND SEEKING OUT ITS PREY.
IT JUST DISCREETLY PACKED ITS THINGS AND TOOK ITSELF AWAY.


IT DIDN'T DO THE KIND OF THINGS THAT MONSTERS ALWAYS SHOULD. IT'S FAIR TO SAY, AS MONSTERS GO, THAT THIS ONE WAS A DUD.
FOR NO ONE SAW IT WHEN IT CAME AND NO ONE SAW IT GO. AND WHEN IT HAD ITS BIGGEST CHANCE IT DIDN'T EVEN SHOW.


IT NEVER LEFT A LOOK OF HORROR ON A SINGLE FACE. IT DIDN'T LEAVE A CLUE THAT IT WAS EVER IN THE PLACE.
IT DIDN'T DO A SINGLE THING AS FAR AS I'M AWARE. TO TELL THE TRUTH I'M NOT SO SURE THAT IT WAS EVER THERE.

THANKS TO JUNE, ROY & JOE

BRIAN ROLLAND '05

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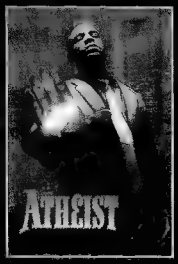

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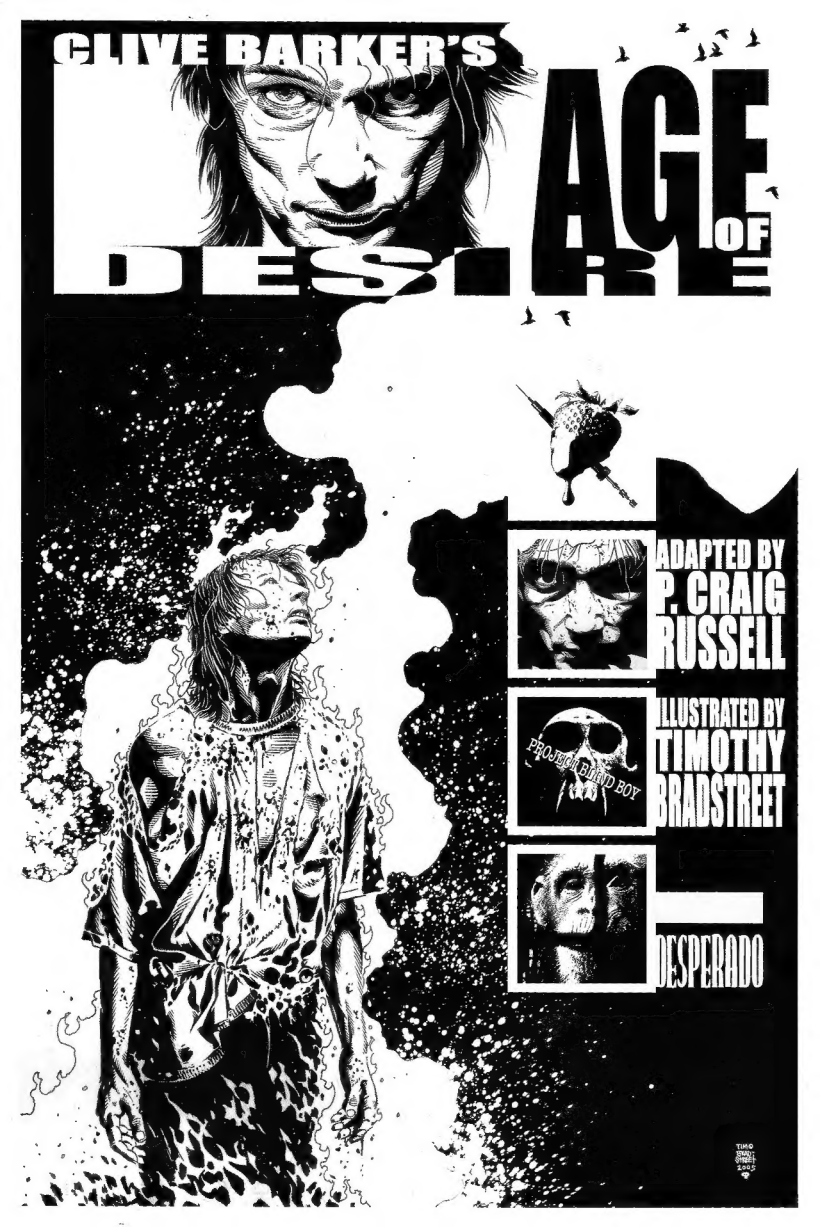
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